

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

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P 032040Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3179

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ PRIORITY

SECDEF PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 0033

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1 LINE 2 DEC 31 VICE DEC 21)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PE CI BL EC

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATIONS ON RECENT TENSIONS

1. ON OCCASION OF ANNUAL EXCHANGE OF NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS (NOON DECEMBER 31) BETWEEN PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND FOREIGN AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES IN LIMA, I HAD OCCASION TO DISCUSS RECENT SPATE OF RUMORS CONCERNING TROOP MOVEMENTS AND BORDER TENSIONS IN SEPARATE BRIEF CONVERSATIONS WITH FONMIN DE LA PUENTE AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM CHILE, ECUADOR AND BOLIVIA. MY QUESTIONS CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO DE LA PUENTE WHO SAID GOP WAS CONCERNED AND ENGAGED IN IMPORTANT EFFORT TO SPIKE SUCH RUMORS. HE REFERRED TO RECENT VISIT TO CHILE BY NAVY MINISTER, ADMIRAL PARODI, AND UPCOMING VISIT TO SANTIAGO BY PRIME MINISTER ARBULU AND TOLD ME TO WATCH FOR THE NEXT DAY'S LIMA NEWSPAPERS

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WHICH WOULD CARRY A WARM EXCHANGE OF NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND THE PRESIDENTS OF CHILE AND ECUADOR WHICH WOULD BE AS IMPORTANT AS IT WOULD BE UNIQUE. HE SAID THIS UNUSUAL EXCHANGE (WHICH IN FACT DID TAKE PLACE) WAS A MAJOR GOP EFFORT TO REDUCE TENSIONS, DISPEL RUMORS AND DEMONSTRATE PERU'S DESIRES FOR PEACEFUL COOPERATION WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. I REFERRED

TO MY RECENT CONVERSATION IN AREQUIPA WITH PERU'S 3RD REGION COMMANDER, DIVISION GENERAL JUAN SANCHEZ, IN WHICH LATTER INTER ALIA ASSURED ME THAT HIS RELATIONS WITH HIS CHILEAN COUNTERPARTS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BORDER WERE FRIENDLY AND MARKED BY FREQUENT EXCHANGES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND VISITS (LIMA'S 11374). DE LA PUENTE SECONDED THIS INFORMATION AND SAID IT WAS THE GOP'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN SUCH RELATIONS ALONG ITS BORDERS.

2. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION THE ECUADORIAN AMBASSADOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH PERU HAD BEEN QUITE TENSE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, PARTICULARLY FOLLOWING THE ABORTED MORALES BERMUDEZ VISIT TO QUITO, BUT ADDED THAT THEY WERE NOW IMPROVING. HE SAID COMMUNICATIONS HAD BEEN RESTORED AND ECUADOR WAS ENGAGED IN A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO IMPROVE CROSS-BORDER COMMUNICATINS AND VISITS PARTICULARLY BETWEEN MILITARY COMMANDERS. HE REFERRED TO ADMIRAL PARODI'S VISIT TO ECUADOR LAST NOVEMBER AND INDICATED THAT ADDITIONAL VISITS OF THIS TYPE WERE BEING CONSIDERED.

3. THE BOLIVIAN AMBASSADOR WAS ALSO FULLY AWARE OF THE RUMORS BUT SAID THAT HIS COUNTRY TRADITIONALLY MAINTAINED CLOSE CROSS-BORDER COMMUNICATIONS WITH PERU. HE, OF COURSE, WAS MORE INTERESTED IN THE CORRIDOR ISSUE AND SAID HE FFELT SOME OF THE RECENT REPORTS OF TENSIONS WERE EXAGGERATED.

4. IN HIS TURN, THE CHILEAN CHARGE, EDUARDO CISTERNAS,  
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SAID THAT THE TENSIONS WHICH WERE HIGH SEVERAL WEEKS AGO HAD NOW ABATED CONSIDERABLY. HE SAID THAT AMBASSADOR BULNES WAS CURRENTLY IN CHILE FOR THE HOLIDAYS AND TO TALK TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET ABOUT THE SITUATION, ESPECIALLY TO TAKE UP WITH HIM THE QUESTION OF CERTAIN INFLAMATORY REPORTING ABOUT PERU WHICH HAD APPEARED IN THE CHILEAN PRESS (ESPECIALLY IN "EL MERCURIO") WHICH WAS RESENTED BY THE GOP AND HAD LED RECENTLY TO A SERIES OF ANTI-CHILEAN ARTICLES (REPLAYS OF ARTICLES BY PRENSA LATINA, EFE, AFP AND OTHERS) IN THE PERUVIAN PRESS (LIMA A-186).. HE INDICATED THAT AS A RESULT OF BULNES' EFFORTS, THE CHILEAN PRESS HAD BECOME LESS STRIDENT AND THE ANTI-CHILE CAMPAIGN IN THE PERUVIAN PRESS HAD ABATED. IN FACT, HE SAID LIMA'S "LA CRONICA" AND ONE OTHER NEWS-PAPER HAD CARRIED IN THE PAST FEW DAYS A REPRINT OF A VERY FAVORABLE "EL MERCURIO" EDITORIAL ON THE STATE OF PERUVIAN/CHILEAN RELATIONS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT LIMA'S "EL COMERCIO", WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN PURGED OF ITS MARXIST ELEMENTS, CONTINUED TO POSE SOME PROBLEMS

IN THIS REGARD. CISTERNAS ALSO REFERRED TO THE POSITIVE BENEFITS OF ADMIRAL PARODI'S VISIT TO SANTIAGO AND THE IMPORTANT UPCOMING VISIT TO CHILE OF PRIME MINISTER ARBULU SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE BETWEEN MARCH 1 AND 8.

5. IN ALL OF THESE CONVERSATIONS I APPLAUDED THE EFFORTS BEING MADE TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS, TO SPIKE RUMORS AND TO COOPERATED TO AVOID AN ARMS RACE. I INDICATED MY BELIEF THAT THESE WERE PART OF A REGIONAL PROBLEM WHICH ONLY THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED COULD RESOLVE. IN MY CONVERSATION WITH THE FONMIN, I INDICATED MY BELIEF THAT THE SIGNIFICANT INJECTION OF SOVIET ARMS INTO PERU HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE QUALMS AND THE SPATE OF RUMORS. DE LA PUENTE RESPONDED TO THIS BY REFERRING TO PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ COMMENT DURING HIS DECEMBER 30 PRESS CONFERENCE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SOVIET EQUIPMENT WAS ACQUIRED TO REPLACE OBSOLETE HARDWARE ON TERMS THAT PERU COULD AFFORD  
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AND WAS NOT OBTAINED FOR AGGRESSIVE PURPOSES (SEE SEPTTEL).  
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## Message Attributes

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